

Genetics and Intertextuality: Formation of a Paragram (the example of Flaubert's *Bouvard et Pécuchet*)

The analysis of manuscripts, called textual genetics, or even genetics, is not a theory. It should not be confused either with hermeneutics, as it does not help the critic to interpret the text. Actually, genetics is a tool which leads to a theory of text production, when it is connected to textual and theoretical issues. The main principle we have to keep in mind is that we do not want to understand *why*, but *how*, the text is produced as it is. The issue I have chosen to study here is that of *intertextuality*. Intertextuality is so important in literature that some critics or theorists - such as Riffaterre - do not hesitate to consider it as the main component of literariness.

I will use the example of the manuscripts of a scene which appears at the end of the eighth chapter of *Bouvard et Pécuchet* (Flaubert's last and unfinished novel), the scene of the "Carcass", that you have in the handouts (see the dossier at the end of the file).

When comparing this text with Baudelaire's poem, "A Carrion" (see the dossier), it becomes obvious that there are many correlations between the two. So it seems that Flaubert used the poem to write his own text; but this is not sure. This is all we can say when we consider the final text; we can draw up a list of similarities, but we cannot go beyond that. Riffaterre, for example, would argue that we are faced with a *contingent* intertext (in his terms), which means that the perception of the hypotext, by the reader, is not *compulsory* to interpret the significance of the so-called hypertext.

But from a genetic standpoint, the problem is slightly different. I would like to show that intertextuality is actually a *component* of the writing of a text. I will not elaborate on the scenarios, in which Flaubert organizes his story little by little. Just a little remark however: the fact that intertextuality is a part of the genesis of the passage is confirmed by the 4th scenario. Flaubert writes:

"dans une de leurs promenades, ils voient une charogne de chien (éviter Baudelaire)".
=> 'during one of their walks, they see the carcass of a dog (avoid Baudelaire)'.

That is to say that the manuscript initially indicates a hypotext that is likely to be used, but at the same time, it creates a major constraint, as this hypotext will have to be erased. However, this will not quite be the case.

I will first focus on the sketch (see the dossier). In the sketches, Flaubert usually tries to place the elements of the scenes, and to organize their internal movement. This is what he does here too: a first statement introduces the narrative program of the *walk*, and then some brief descriptive details appear; these are amplified in the margin and in the space between the lines.

If we consider the general structure of the scene, we can see that it reproduces the general movement of the poem: atmosphere, location, mention and then description of the carcass, and finally a comment by the spectator in Baudelaire, as by Pécuchet in Flaubert: "nous serons comme ça bientôt" ('we will be like this soon'); the character's discourse in Flaubert paraphrases the first lines of Baudelaire's 10th and 11th stanzas. When Flaubert begins his sketch, he certainly has the poem in front of him, or at least a vivid memory of a recent reading. The folio keeps traces of this, to such an extent that the hypotext here is a *hypogram*, which generates a diegetic model, and a structure whose basic components are recognizable by analogy (I am just paraphrasing here the Riffaterrian definition of a hypogram).

I will only focus here on the description of the body (which is, in itself, very complex). At first, it seems to merely represent the autonomous and stereotyped expansion of the descriptive system of *carcass*, whose initial sememe necessitates (or implies) a certain vocabulary (such as *worms*, *smell*, and so forth). However, in the middle of this enumeration, the detail of the *sun* is quite striking. It is isolated, and cannot, logically, appear as a metonym of *corpse*: this is a foreign element which comes between *worms* and *smell*. Moreover, when Flaubert corrects the page, he modifies the position of some clauses, but he does not try to modify the situation of the *sun*, and he does not tie it to the description of the atmosphere he elaborates, although such a situation would be much more logical. This is what Riffaterre

would call a *descriptive ungrammaticality*, which is one of the traces of the intertext. Indeed, in Baudelaire, the *sun* is a part of the description of the body (and not of the atmosphere), since the 3rd stanza reads: "le soleil rayonnait sur cette pourriture".

Moreover, similarities appear *everywhere*, and they stem from processes of avoidance. For example this utterance, in the space between the lines, "le reste du corps une plaie mouvante" ('the rest of the body a moving wound') seems to merge 3 sememes which are separate in the poem: that of *movement*, described in the 6th stanza; that of *shapelessness* (8th stanza: "les formes s'effaçaient et n'étaient plus qu'un rêve"), while the beginning of the comparison of the *wound*, which contains the sememe *hole*, repeats the image of the second stanza, where the carcass "ouvrait d'une façon nonchalante et cynique son ventre".

In Baudelaire's poem, the *flies* follow the *smell*; they precede it in the sketch. They "bourdonnaient sur ce ventre putride" in the poem's 5th stanza; they are "dessus" ('above') in Flaubert's margin, but above nothing yet ("ça remuait", *that* was moving'). The adjective *stridentes* might be an echo of the *strange music* in the poem (7th stanza), but it rather seems to act as a substitute for the adjective "bourdonnantes", which would be expected here.

In the sketch, the *smell* of the corpse "semble dévorer". This condenses three traits of *necrophagy* which are present in the poem: *dog* (9th stanza: "reprendre au squelette le morceau qu'elle avait lâché"); *vermin* (12th stanza: "qui vous mangera de baisers"); and *sun* (3rd stanza: "comme afin de la cuire à point"). Indeed, the *smell* is emphasized in the poem (4th stanza): "la puanteur était si forte, que sur l'herbe vous crûtes vous évanouir". It is no less emphasized in Flaubert, although differently: it is twofold, and appears at the beginning and at the end of the scene. The verb "redoublait" (in the margin), seems to suggest that both occurrences have same origin, while the adjectives qualifying each of them, "infecte" and "horrible", stem from the distortion of a single expression in the poem (10th stanza): "horrible infection".

This repetition of the *smell* reveals an initial transformation of the hypogram. Another change will have both structural and semiotic consequences. The description of the *carcass* contains 2 incompatible statements: on the one hand "seulement la tête et les pattes" ('only the head and the paws'), and on the other hand: "le reste du corps" ('the rest of the body'). This is once again an ungrammaticality whose very origin is intertextual. Indeed, the first statement conceals an obscure *presupposition*. But one can unveil a series of inferences which explain the generative system: only the *head* and the *paws* are recognizable as such (the rest is a "plaie grisâtre", a 'greyish wound'), that is to say that they do not belong to the action of the *worms*, therefore they do not belong to the *carcass*, and, even more so, they are not described by Baudelaire. The poem focuses on the description of the *belly*; since the original text has not saturated the description, it is possible to fill the gaps, to represent *something else*; which explains the appearance of two new descriptive systems (that of the *head*, and that of the *paws*). At a genetic level, the trace of the intertext can reveal the hypotext which generated it, but also the presuppositions that allowed the writer to avoid it.

I will now briefly consider the first draft (see the dossier). After the initial transformation of the hypogram, in the sketch, a general variation appears in the rough drafts, which has an effect on the structures of the text, but also on the vocabulary and on the mimesis. I will say that this phenomenon reveals a *paragram*, a term I have coined and defined as: a product of the hypertextual and stylistic derivation of a hypogram.

The writing of the beginning of the description ("seulement" becomes "il n'en restait plus que") probably explains why Flaubert transforms *reste du corps* into *ventre*. (Flaubert hates repetitions: *restait / reste*). If the repetition disappears, the hypotext reappears: Baudelaire uses the same term twice (in the 2nd and 5th stanzas). It is obvious that Flaubert goes on looking at his model. However, when he starts to write, the use of the hypotext curiously complicates his task rather than simplifying it. In fact, being inspired by Baudelaire, Flaubert has to deal with 2 different problems: first, he has to resolve the semantic ambiguity that the poem contains, and then he has to condense all the intertextual details into one paragraph, or

even into one part of a paragraph, as new details begin to grow and to amplify the beginning of the description (for instance, in the margin: "bouquet de poils", 'bunch of hair').

In fact, the poem contains two incompatible isotopies, which raises a problem of representation. On the one hand, that of the *hole*, which is visible in the second stanza (the belly is open) and which reappears in the description of the worms coming out of it (5th stanza); and on the other hand that of the *bump*, which Baudelaire uses to give an appearance of life to the body in decay (6th stanza): "tout cela montait, descendait comme une vague" and "on eût dit que le corps, enflé d'un souffle vague, vivait en se multipliant". It seems that in order to be able to write, Flaubert has to *see* beforehand; that is, to make connections and semantic choices to build up an image that the poem does not give directly.

The corrections of the draft show this clearly. First of all, the comparison of the *belly* is transformed: the *wound* becomes a *bump*. From a semantic standpoint, the 2 words *plaie* and *bosse* are opposite: the transformation is thus a trace of the ambiguity of the poem.

Then, the *movement* has to be clarified and developed (this is shown by the points of suspension). Indeed, in the first draft of the page, the *movement* is as vague as it is in the poem: "ça remuait" (there is "tout *cela*", in the poem). The image becomes more precise as the movement represents the action of the *bump*, and this initial decision will influence the rest of the writing. The movement is modified, but it still gives the same impression of life as it does in Baudelaire's text: "on eût dit" is paraphrased by "semblait", whereas "palpitait" paraphrases "vivait en se multipliant".

The *worms* are transformed into *vermin* (the word *vermine* is in the 12th stanza), and they are associated with the *bump*. They both conjure up an image which now differs from that of the poem, as they seem exactly symmetrical: the *worms* are not situated in the opening of the belly, from which they come, but they swarm on its *bump* (*dessus*). In the first draft this location was related to the detail of the *flies* (as in the poem). As we might expect, such a writing choice will create further problems.

On the other hand, the *sun*, which is not copied at first, reappears in the margin, with a clause: "chauffée par le soleil" ('heated by the sun'). It repeats Baudelaire's sememe of the

strong warmth in "cuire à point" (3rd stanza) and in "brûlante" (2nd stanza). The syntax clearly shows that Flaubert is already thinking of inserting it in the sentence. But we cannot know exactly *how*, since the past participle *chauffée* is feminine, and could qualify the *bosse* as well as the *vermine* (both nouns are feminine in French). Maybe Flaubert hesitates; however the parallel addition of the comparison "comme des grains de riz foisonnant" indicates that it is probably the *vermin* which is heated by the sun. The intertext is still active, as the comparison comes from the 7th stanza of the poem: "le grain qu'un vanneur d'un mouvement rythmique / Agite et tourne dans son van". Flaubert extracts the word *grain*, while the present participle, *foisonnant*, paraphrases the one that Baudelaire uses in the 6th stanza: "se multipliant."

Well, here are a lot of details for a single belly; or, rather, for a single sentence. It is not surprising then that Flaubert has a lot of problems organising them syntactically. But syntax and semantics interact (as least in genetics). This is clearly shown by the transformation of the *flies*.

In Baudelaire's poem, the *sun* and the *flies* act on the carcass with the same preposition: *sur*. However, Flaubert's obsession to avoid repetitions (rather than to avoid Baudelaire) prevents him from linking *mouches* with *bosse*, since he has already used the adverb "dessus" for the *vermin*. This stylistic problem will be resolved thanks to a structural change, a process that is often found in Flaubert's drafts. I will try to give an account of it.

A new detail appears several times in the space between the lines, before it belongs to the descriptive system of the *head*: "paupières sur cavités des yeux sans globes" (which, translated literally, reads: 'eyelids on cavities of the eyes without globes'). The invention of this detail is guided by the hypogram. Of course, it does not take this form in Baudelaire's text, but it contains two sememes which are found in the poem: that of the *hole* (used before with the *wound*) and that of the *skeleton*, in the 9th stanza, a detail which raises another semantic problem (if it is a carcass, it is not a skeleton yet).

Moreover, Baudelaire mentions several *eyes*: the *eye* of the dog (9th stanza) and the *eyes* of the poet (10th stanza). In Flaubert's folio, this new detail is very close to that of the

flies, which is isolated now; this probably gives Flaubert the idea of their association, in the margin: "des mouches emplissaient les trous des yeux" ('the holes of the eyes were filled with flies'). As in Baudelaire's poem, the hole is filled (2nd stanza: "son ventre *plein* d'exhalaisons"), while the *flies* move, in the description, from the belly to the head, suddenly differing from the model which generated them (they will actually return to their previous position in the second draft).

I will try now to draw some conclusions. The carcass intertext, which a poetics of printed texts would consider as *contingent*, in fact becomes *compulsory* when it is tackled from a genetic standpoint. Baudelaire's poem appears in the sketch as a hypogram that does not propose a generic structure (Flaubert does not write poetry), but that provides a diegetic model. The phenomena of derivation in the following drafts reveal the rules that govern this specific type of intertextuality.

Semantic derivations, that merge different sememes of the hypogram; *lexical* derivations, which are various aspects of paraphrase; *syntactic* derivations, that link details of the poem to one another. However, in the drafts, the distinction between these 3 dimensions is unclear, or even artificial, because the transformations have an effect on *all* the levels of the text. Moreover, it is for Flaubert a question of rewriting *his own* carcass, borrowing many details from Baudelaire, but not *against* Baudelaire. If Flaubert really wanted to "avoid Baudelaire", as he wrote in the scenarios, then he would try to maintain his own details, which is not the case. Therefore, the paragram does not stem from a choice between *rejection* or *integration*. The text reproduces its hypogram without copying it directly, because paragrammatic processes imply a dynamic interaction between *intratextual* derivations and *intertextual* derivations. In this respect, a genetic poetics considers intertextuality as a *writing process* (visible in manuscripts) and not as the *effect* of transpositions (often invisible in printed texts). It is able to reveal not only how a writer is *inspired* by a literary corpus, but also how, using it more or less cautiously, he or she transforms it, through the writing, into another new text.

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Baudelaire

Une Charogne

Rappelez-vous l'objet que nous vîmes, mon âme,
Ce beau matin d'été si doux :
Au détour d'un sentier une charogne infâme
Sur un lit semé de cailloux,

Les jambes en l'air, comme une femme lubrique,
Brûlante et suant les poisons,
Ouvrait d'une façon nonchalante et cynique
Son ventre plein d'exhalaisons.

Le soleil rayonnait sur cette pourriture
Comme afin de la cuire à point,
Et de rendre au centuple à la grande Nature
Tout ce qu'ensemble elle avait joint ;

Et le ciel regardait la carcasse superbe
Comme une fleur s'épanouir.
La puanteur était si forte, que sur l'herbe
Vous crûtes vous évanouir.

Les mouches bourdonnaient sur ce ventre putride,
D'où sortaient de noirs bataillons
De larves, qui coulaient comme un épais liquide
Le long de ces vivants haillons.

Tout cela descendait, montait comme une vague,
Ou s'élançait en pétillant ;
On eût dit que le corps, enflé d'un souffle vague,
Vivait en se multipliant.

Et ce monde rendait une étrange musique,
Comme l'eau courante et le vent,
Ou le grain qu'un vanneur d'un mouvement rythmique
Agite et tourne dans son van.

Les formes s'effaçaient et n'étaient plus qu'un rêve
Une ébauche lente à venir,
Sur la toile oubliée et que l'artiste achève
Seulement par le souvenir.

Derrière les rochers une chienne inquiète
Nous regardait d'un œil fâché,
Épiait le moment de reprendre au squelette
Le morceau qu'elle avait lâché.

– Et pourtant vous serez semblable à cette ordure,
À cette horrible infection,
Étoile de mes yeux, soleil de ma nature,
Vous, mon ange et ma passion !

Oui ! telle vous serez, ô la reine des grâces,
Après les derniers sacrements,
Quand vous irez, sous l'herbe et les floraisons grasses,
Moisir parmi les ossements.

Alors, ô ma beauté ! dites à la vermine
Qui vous mangera de baisers,
Que j'ai gardé la forme et l'essence divine
De mes amours décomposés !

Flaubert: *Bouvard et Pécuchet*

Ils voulurent faire comme autrefois une promenade dans les champs, allèrent très loin, se perdirent. – De petits nuages moutonnaient dans le ciel, le vent balançait les clochettes des avoines, le long d'un pré un ruisseau murmurait, quand tout à coup une odeur infecte les arrêta ; et ils virent sur des cailloux, entre des ronces¹⁰, la charogne d'un chien.

Les quatre membres étaient desséchés. Le rictus de la gueule découvrait sous des babines bleuâtres des crocs d'ivoire ; à la place du ventre, c'était un amas de couleur terreuse, et qui semblait palpiter tant grouillait dessus la vermine. Elle s'agitait, frappée par le soleil, sous le bourdonnement des mouches, dans cette intolérable odeur, une odeur féroce et comme dévorante.

Cependant Bouvard plissait le front ; et des larmes mouillèrent ses yeux. – Pécuchet dit stoïquement : « Nous serons un jour comme ça ! » (p. 321).

sketch

La fantaisie leur vient de refaire une promenade dans la campagne
 petits nuages, beau temps, petits nuages gris perle, ils avancent à tout à coup, sur un tas
 (une odeur infecte les saisit - ~~en l'air~~ - au coin d'un mur. Cailloux
 entre la charogne d'un chien) M terrible)
 orties, mouches, vers grouillant. - Soleil - odeur qui sembl'e/ait devorer.
 (se les mouche) (2) et s'approchent.
 solem- la tête - les pattes, Bouvard s'attendrit larmes aux yeux.
 - le reste du corps une plaie mouvante. cela
 P.-eh bien, il faudra-en venir-là, nous serons comme ça bientôt.
 (2) et dire que)

- tres beau temps.
 petits nuages gris perles
 moutonnaient dans
 le ciel bleu - tournent
 Le long des haies des cours

 s'engagerent dans un sentier
 entre les murs.

N. seulement la tête et les pattes.
 - rictus de la gueule, pattes très
 seches momifiées - le reste du
 corps comme une plaie
 grisatre. - ça remaît
 audessus des mouches stridentes
 et l'odeur redoublait
 une odeur horrible qui
 semblait devorer.

Pecuch res glacé dans
 ils restent en)
 (une contempli (4) fixés
 par l'horreur même du
 spectacle. (1)

La grosse mine de B. se /g/contracta.
 - sa poitrine se gonfla/e. soupir
 larmes aux yeux. Pecuch stoiquement (1)

first draft

L'envie les prit de refaire une promenade dans la Campagne. - un beau jour
 ils alle marchèrent le long au bord des haies
 petits nuages moutonnaient dans le ciel bleu ... les clotures des cours haies, ils
 - mouche) allèrent très loin, se perdirent
 tournent. - champs d'avoine s'engagerent dans un sentier. une
 le long des) qu'embrèrent un ruisseau qui faisait des cascades à pas
 une odeur infecte les saisit. ils avancent, à tout à coup, au coin d'un mur
 (se les mouche) (2) et s'approchent.
 entre les murs, se perdirent
 ils s'engagerent dans un
 sentier
 (se les mouche) (2) et s'approchent.
 solem- la tête - les pattes, Bouvard s'attendrit larmes aux yeux.
 - le reste du corps une plaie mouvante. cela
 P.-eh bien, il faudra-en venir-là, nous serons comme ça bientôt.
 (2) et dire que)

un être par) qu'il se connaissait
 qui entraient où ils étaient
 par où
 venus, d'autres qu'ils
 n'avaient jamais vus
 ne reconnaissent pas
 l'ont très loin, se perdirent
 ils s'engagerent dans un
 sentier
 plus sèches que
 2 bouquets de
 des bâtons
 ils ont pu être
 de comme trompillés
 15 mouches emplissaient
 les bakiens
 1 navire des yeux (1)
 font
 m des gens de ce frottement
 hauffé par le soleil
 m orie se penchant
 dessus.

jour
 clair à deux
 temps
 ils alle marchèrent le long au bord des haies
 petits nuages moutonnaient dans le ciel bleu ... les clotures des cours haies, ils
 - mouche) allèrent très loin, se perdirent
 tournent. - champs d'avoine s'engagerent dans un sentier. une
 le long des) qu'embrèrent un ruisseau qui faisait des cascades à pas
 une odeur infecte les saisit. ils avancent, à tout à coup, au coin d'un mur
 (se les mouche) (2) et s'approchent.
 entre les murs, se perdirent
 ils s'engagerent dans un
 sentier
 (se les mouche) (2) et s'approchent.
 solem- la tête - les pattes, Bouvard s'attendrit larmes aux yeux.
 - le reste du corps une plaie mouvante. cela
 P.-eh bien, il faudra-en venir-là, nous serons comme ça bientôt.
 (2) et dire que)

odeur horrible, et qui semblait devorer.
 tolérable -
 Ils restai/èrent en contemplation. Fixés par l'horreur du même du spectacle
 La grosse mine de Bouvard se contracta. sa-poitrine se gonfla - soupir -
 larmes au lui vinrent aux yeux - que bientôt, peut-être
 Pecuchet stoiquement. « à dire que nous sommes comme ça - dans un avenir
 prochain.